

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 14, 2005

The Honorable Joe Barton
Chairman
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2109 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John D. Dingell
Ranking Member
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2328 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Cliff Stearns
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce Trade and
Consumer Protection
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2370 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Janice Schakowsky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce Trade and
Consumer Protection
Energy and Commerce Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1027 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We are writing to express our support for enactment of the motor vehicle safety provisions included in the Senate-passed version of H.R. 3, the Transportation Equity Act, A Legacy for Users.

Preliminary figures released by the U.S. Department of Transportation indicate that in 2004 there were 42,800 highway deaths, an increase over 2003 fatalities, and nearly 3 million injuries at an annual cost exceeding \$230 billion. The largest increase in highway fatalities is occurring in rollover crashes. Motor vehicle crashes continue to be the leading cause of preventable death for all Americans ages 2 to 33. Dr. Jeffrey Runge, Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), stated that number could be as high as 50,000 annually by 2008. As we are sure you will agree, the human and financial toll of losses to American families across the country is unacceptable.

The motor vehicle safety provisions in H.R. 3 were reported out of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee for the second year in a row and adopted by the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support. For years, in some cases decades, these safety measures have been under consideration by NHTSA, but never implemented. The provisions call for the establishment of safety standards for a number of NHTSA priorities including: vehicle rollover prevention, side impact crash protection, occupant ejection prevention, roof crush, 15-passenger van safety, and child safety measures. It also calls for improved data collection and better consumer information. These provisions are designed to set goals for action, but also give NHTSA broad flexibility in setting effective dates for standards to be implemented, and give

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motor vehicle manufacturers the freedom to choose the design or technology that best meets the agency's designated performance standards.

These provisions are supported by a broad coalition of medical, health, safety, consumer and child advocacy groups, insurers and auto safety equipment manufacturers. Also, according to an April 18, 2005 article in *Automotive News*, the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers is "neutral" concerning the Senate-passed bill because the legislation is close to the regulatory priorities of NHTSA.

We urge your support for these safety measures. If enacted, they will have a profound effect on the health and safety of our nation's children, teens and families for years to come.

Sincerely,

Edward J. Markey

Mary Bono

Jim Davis

Frank Pallone, Jr.

Alfred R. Upton

Amodeo

John Shim DL-19

Heather Z. Lih

Tom Swinick

Wanda Z. Shoo

Tammy Balchun

Cheryl Hays

Mile Castle

Shelley Moore Capito

Lois Capps

Virgil Goode

Nik Schulz

Hilda L. Solis

Mark Warner

Sherrod Brown

Ed Busby

Henry A. Waxman

Deane Beafette

Ernie L. Enge